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Wife Seized In Death Of Millionaire

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — Sheets hung across windows today at the big white stucco and brick house where federal agents joined police in investigating the shooting death of William E. Thoresen III, a millionaire gun collector.

In jail, booked for investigation of murder, was Thoresen's slim, brunette widow, Louise, 33, who ran to a neighbor's home Wednesday saying: "Bill has been shot. Call an ambulance."

The handsome Thoresen, 32, his nude body punctured by two or three pistol bullets in the chest, was found on a bed in a second floor room.

Police Chief H. R. Morton said FBI agents and agents from the U.S. Treasury Department firearms division are "interested in the circumstances."

Some agents were at the house late Wednesday, but there was no word on whether they had begun checking contents of a large number of boxes and cartons reported to have been stored there recently.

Earlier Police Capt. A. J. Bilbo said the shooting came "as climax to a family quarrel." The Thoresens had started divorce proceedings in Phoenix, Ariz., last year, prior to moving here in November.

Gun collecting, which Thoresen said had been his hobby since he was 9, led to his conviction in March 1969 on a federal charge of illegal interstate shipment of firearms. The charge followed a 1967 raid on the Thoresens' San Francisco mansion and a warehouse where 77 tons of weapons and ammunition were seized, including machine guns and an antitank cannon.

The day before he died, Thoresen's appeal from the conviction was upheld in the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco, which ordered a rehearing of the case.

While his appeal was pending Thoresen had been free on bail under sentence of six months in prison. He and his wife, convicted of aiding and abetting, were each fined $4,000 and she drew 18 months probation.